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## **Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Advances Its Rural Microgrids to Protect Northern New Mexico Communities Amid Upcoming Extreme Wildfire Risk**

**Taos, NM — February 10, 2026** — As Northern New Mexico faces an increasingly severe wildfire season driven by prolonged drought and record-low precipitation, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is continuing construction and design of critical microgrid infrastructure to ensure rural communities maintain access to essential electric services during emergencies.

KCEC is currently operating under heightened awareness, given minimal precipitation throughout the winter months and the resulting elevated wildfire risk across Northern New Mexico. With conditions pointing to a very high probability of wildfire activity, KCEC is taking a proactive and operationally focused approach to reduce the likelihood of wildfire ignition within its service territory. This includes advancing resilient infrastructure projects, strengthening system preparedness, and implementing preventive measures designed to protect communities, critical services, and the landscapes we serve.

Microgrids play a uniquely vital role in rural Northern New Mexico, where geographic isolation, long distribution lines, limited access routes, and extreme weather conditions significantly increase the risk and impact of power disruptions. For many KCEC communities, electricity is directly tied to public safety, water systems, emergency response, healthcare access, communications, and heating.

KCEC's microgrid projects in Taos, El Rito West, and Peñasco are designed to provide localized, resilient power during wildfire events, public safety power shutoffs, and other grid disruptions, ensuring critical services remain operational when needed most.

The Taos microgrid 60% design is currently under review, while El Rito West's 60% design is nearing completion and expected by February 17, with Peñasco progressing in parallel. These systems integrate battery energy storage and advanced controls to allow for islanded operation, supporting community resilience during prolonged outages. The batteries for the microgrid projects are currently on order, marking a significant milestone in advancing construction readiness. Site construction activities are expected to begin in **July 2026**, with a project completion anticipated in **June 2027**.

Importantly, KCEC is continuing this project despite the loss of anticipated federal funding, underscoring the cooperative's commitment to its members and the long-term safety of the communities it serves.

"Rural communities cannot afford to wait when it comes to resilience," said Luis A. Reyes, CEO of KCEC. "While the loss of federal funding presents challenges, the need for reliable power during wildfire events is too critical to pause. These microgrids are about protecting lives, maintaining essential services, and ensuring our communities are not left vulnerable during emergencies."

Construction engineering teams are coordinating with equipment suppliers to finalize technical details for transformer configurations, grounding schemes, and system performance. While final confirmations are still pending, KCEC is moving forward with site planning, balance-of-system coordination, and procurement activities to maintain project momentum.

These investments reflect KCEC's long-standing mission as a member-owned cooperative: to prioritize community needs over convenience, especially in regions where infrastructure resilience can mean the difference between continuity and crisis.

As wildfire risk intensifies across the region, KCEC remains focused on delivering innovative, resilient energy solutions that safeguard Northern New Mexico's rural communities. This microgrid project will expand KCEC's energy portfolio by adding 7.5 MW of BESS (38.25 MWh) capacity to maintain critical local power loads and services.

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### **About Kit Carson Electric Cooperative**

Formed in 1944, Kit Carson is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative in northern New Mexico and is the second largest cooperative in the state. Kit Carson is one of 16 electric cooperatives that serve rural New Mexico communities, serving nearly 30,000 members in Taos, Colfax and Rio Arriba counties. To learn more about Kit Carson, visit [www.kitcarson.com](http://www.kitcarson.com).